



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Functional Fabric Fair Fall 2026 Announces Expert Talks Education Lineup for Portland Show

Three days of education, networking and sourcing open with the Day 0 OIA Catalyst Conference October 26, followed by Expert Talks programming October 27-28

NORWALK, CT (September 23, 2026) – Functional Fabric Fair powered by PERFORMANCE DAYS®, taking place October 26-28, 2026, at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, has announced its Expert Talks education lineup for the Fall 2026 edition. The fair opens October 26 with the Day 0 OIA Catalyst Conference, developed in partnership with the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), followed by two full days of exhibit hall sourcing and Expert Talks programming on October 27-28.

Designers, product developers and material decision-makers across the performance and sports apparel industries will gain actionable insight into performance innovation, regulatory shifts and circular solutions shaping the future of textiles for the Fall 2027/2028 seasons.

Expert Talks

The Expert Talks series returns with nearly 20 sessions exploring performance science, circularity, regulatory change and trend forecasting. Stewart Sheppard, Founder & Principal Consultant of S2 Consulting, will again serve as the Expert Talks host, which will feature sessions that give attendees direct access to breakthrough developments and the companies driving measurable sustainability progress.

Session Highlights

Tuesday, October 27

- **Performance Colors: Summer 2028 Update, Winter 2028/29 Kickoff** - Nora Kühner
- **Phase Two of the War on Retail - What May Happen After the Mid-Term Elections** - Rick Helfenbein, Consultant and Former CEO, American Apparel & Footwear Association; Ambassador Ron Sorini, Sorini Strategic Advisors
- **Forum Insights** - Alexa Dehmel
- **The DPP Playbook: Navigating Europe's New Product Transparency Rules** - James Pollack, Marten Law- James Pollack, Marten Law
- **More Data, More Options: What You Find When You Look at the Full Picture** - Jan Beringer, Hohenstein; Shane O'Toole, Red Wolf Innovations; Tim Sherry, Hohenstein
- **Roadmap to Adoption: Bio-Based Materials, A Panel Discussion Led by Hyosung** - Malvina Hoxha, Hyosung TNC; Ajay Chadha, REI Co-op
- **Think With Your Hands: Prototyping in the Age of AI** - Zac West, Ideology
- **Stop the Stink: The New Antimicrobial "Switching Window"** - Barry McGeough and Bernd Leisenfeld, QMT Quick Med Technologies; Don Reardon, Keen; Harrie Schoots, AATCC; Andy Polk, FDRA
- **Beyond T2T: Advancing Polyester Circularity and Microplastic Fiber Mitigation** - Cheryl Smyre, Parkdale Advanced Materials; Chad Bolick, Intrinsic Advanced Materials; Jack Chang-Chien, Cyclone North America

- **A/W28 Trend Intelligence: Performance, Reimagined** - Nichole de Carle, London Contour Experts
- **From Chemical Inputs to Environmental Releases: Managing Environmental Risks in Textile Manufacturing** - Sumit Sarker, bluesign technologies

Wednesday, October 28

- **The Visionary Outlook: Design Beyond Perfection** - Nora Kühner
- **From Fiber to Market: How Cross-Functional Collaboration Turns Sustainable Innovation Into Product** - Samantha Frederick, Sustainable Apparel & Material Strategies; Erin Kinz, Nike; Lisa-Thien Hue To, LT Studio; Malvina Hoxha, Hyosung TNC
- **Bio-Based Reality: Can Renewable Materials Make Circular Design Easier?** - Davide Ballico, DB Orama Consultancy; Neil Bell, Future of Textiles; Ruth Kelly, Weft x Warp
- **Tariffs Are the Easy Part: A Guide to Navigating Trade Uncertainty and Supply Chain Risk** - Joshua Werthaiser, Downlite International
- **Garment Take-Back Laws: EPR Already in Effect and Expanding** - Jan Beringer, Hohenstein; Will Troutman, Norton Rose Fulbright; Tim Sherry, Hohenstein
- **What Artificial Intelligence Changed for Small Brands, and What It Did Not** - James Ewsuk and Hidi Fankhauser, Design Works
- **Transform Your Business for Success Under New Textile Circularity Laws** - Keelin Christensen, Outdoor Industry Association; Kevin Ann Jordan, Circular Textile Alliance; Nellie Cohen, BALEEN; Todd Copeland, Copeland Consultancy
- **Can Consumer Demand Scale Next-Generation Materials?** - Brittany Sierra, Sustainable Fashion Forum

Visit the [Expert Talks Schedule](#) for full session details.



Focus Topic

As the textile industry accelerates its shift away from fossil-based resources, bio-based materials are emerging as a key driver for the future of performance textiles. New innovations are creating fresh possibilities in functionality, design and responsible material development. The Fall 2026 Focus Topic spotlights high-impact innovations derived partly or fully from biomass, featuring solutions that reduce dependency on fossil resources, improve material transparency and support the industry's transition to more future-oriented material systems. The shift toward bio-based solutions also raises important questions around scalability, feedstock sourcing, traceability, certification and supply chain transparency, topics that will be addressed throughout the Expert Talks program.

Day 0 OIA Catalyst Conference

Tickets for both attendees and exhibitors are available for the Day 0 OIA Catalyst Conference, developed in partnership with OIA. The conference will take October 26 at the Oregon Convention Center in the Oregon Ballroom 201/202, ahead of two full days of exhibit hall sourcing and Expert Talks education on October 27-28.

Developed in response to attendee feedback, the Day 0 OIA Catalyst Conference delivers pragmatic sustainability guidance, regulatory updates, real world case studies and interactive breakout rooms, giving the outdoor and performance industry a destination for tackling critical sustainability challenges, connecting with peers, and staying ahead of emerging trends. Title sponsor is *GORE-TEX® Brand*, with support from *Hyosung TNC* as the Platinum sponsor.

View the 2026 Day 0 Conference Agenda [here](#).

"Every edition of Functional Fabric Fair education is built from the ground up to meet the moment," said Steve McCullough, Event Vice President, Functional Fabric Fair. "That means our Expert Talks and the Day 0 OIA Catalyst Conference reflect exactly what brands are dealing with right now, especially on the regulatory side, where things move fast enough that last season's answers are already out of date. We bring in incredible speakers, but who is in the room matters just as much. When people facing the same compliance and sourcing pressures are sitting next to each other, that peer-to-peer exchange is where a lot of the real learning and change happens."

Exhibit Hall and Features

The Fall 2026 exhibit hall will feature more than [330+ sustainable certified suppliers](#) presenting functional fabrics, finishes, trims, accessories and material innovations. Alongside Expert Talks education sessions, attendees will find live demonstrations and curated discovery areas including the Forums (Cellulose, Wool and Trend), Bodywear Collective, Innovation Zone and Future Fabrics Expo Innovation Hub. Dedicated networking spaces, including the Sustainability Lounge and Italian Bar, along with happy hours and social gatherings, will further support meaningful industry connection.

Registration Information

Functional Fabric Fair is a trade-only event, free to verified designers, product developers, purchasing agents, material managers and students in the outdoor, performance and lifestyle apparel sectors. The Day 0 OIA Catalyst Conference requires separate paid registration and seating is limited.

[<< Register for Media Here >>](#)

[<< Register to Attend Here >>](#)

For travel and discounted hotels, visit [here](#).

For full show information, registration links and updates on all 2026 editions, visit www.functionalfabricfair.com.

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Functional Fabric Fair Images can be found [here](#).

About Functional Fabric Fair powered by PERFORMANCE DAYS®

Functional Fabric Fair powered by PERFORMANCE DAYS® is a trade-exclusive event and platform showcasing the latest trends in textile development for the apparel industry. In addition to a curated marketplace dedicated to the responsible sourcing of high-performance functional fabrics and accessories, Functional Fabric Fair provides expert-led education, supplier recommendations, and a university program that exposes students to textile and apparel developers. FunctionalFabricFair.com

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